Corporation for National and Community Service

2010 Social Innovation Fund

The Mayor's Fund to Advance New York City

Reviewer Comments – Phase 1

Table of Contents

2010 Social Innovation Fund

The Mayor's Fund to Advance New York City

Section 1 – Reviewer Comments: Group 1

SOCIAL INNOVATION FUND 2010
PANEL CONSENSUS FORM

*Instructions throughout this form are indicated in **red**.*

Before you begin, please fill out the Applicant Name and Application ID# in the above header. This Panel Consensus Form (PCF) is where each panel records its consensus assessment of an application. The completion of this form may be led by any panelist; that individual will be designated the Lead Reviewer (LR). All Expert Reviewers are expected to serve as the LR on at least one application. The consensus assessment should be based on the panel's examination of the full application Narrative, which consists of the following 3 categories:

Category	Percentage	Subcategories
Program Design	45%	A. Goals and Objectives
		B. Use of Evidence
		C. Community Resources

		D. Description of Activities
		  i. Subgranting
		  ii. Technical Assistance and Support

Organizational Capacity	35%	A. Ability to Provide Program Oversight
		B. Ability to Provide Fiscal Oversight
Cost-Effectiveness and Budget Adequacy	20%	A. Budget and Program Design
		B. Match Sources

Panels will utilize Panel Consensus Calls to discuss each application and come to agreement on the content of the Narrative Assessment for each category, the Rating for each category, the Overall Appraisal Statement and the Band in which the application will be placed. When completing this form, the LR should rely on four primary documents: 1) the application being reviewed; 2) the IRW Compilation for the application being reviewed (compiled prior to discussion by the panel Facilitator); 3) the SIF Notice of Federal Funds Availability (NOFA); 4) the Consensus Rubric at the end of this form.

Please complete the following steps:

1. For each of the 3 categories (Program Design; Organizational Capacity; Cost-Effectiveness and Budget Adequacy), the LR should:
    a. **Write a 3 – 5 sentence Narrative Assessment** reflecting the panel's assessment of the quality of the response in the category being assessed; it is important that this narrative is not a summary of the application, rather the panel's evaluation of the application's quality.
    b. **List the application's significant strengths and weaknesses and annotate each.** Each significant strength or weakness **must** be supported by **at least one** of the Eligibility or Application Review Criteria that were in the SIF NOFA. (examples are included in this form)
    c. **Taking into consideration** both the Narrative Assessment and the listed strengths and weaknesses, **select a Rating** by checking the appropriate box.

2. **Complete the Overall Appraisal section.** In this section, you will:
    a. Provide an Overall Appraisal Statement; and
    b. Select a consensus Band that represents the quality of the application as a whole. The Bands are described in the Overall Appraisal section at the end of this form, and Appendix D of the Review Guide.

3. **After the panel has discussed all applications, provide a Rank for each application.**

PROGRAM DESIGN (45%)

The **Social Innovation Fund Notice of Funding Availability (NOFA) states** that the following will be considered when reviewing an applicant's Program Design.

A. GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

The Corporation asks applicants to use a thematic approach in describing their proposed investments in community organizations. As established in the Act, there are two basic operational models of SIF intermediaries. The first is a SIF that will operate in a single geographic location, and address one or more priority issues within that location. This model is referred to as a "geographically-based SIF." The second model is a SIF that will address a single priority issue area in multiple geographic locations. This model is referred to as an "issue-based SIF." The Corporation will assess whether the application properly proposes goals and objectives as either a geographically-based or an issue-based SIF.

i. **Geographically-Based SIF**
    To apply as a geographically-based SIF, the applicant must propose to focus on serving low-income communities within a specific local geographic area, and propose to focus on improving measurable outcomes related to <u>one or more</u> of the following priority issue areas:
    *   **Economic Opportunity** *– Increasing economic opportunities for economically disadvantaged individuals;*
    *   **Youth Development and School Support** *– Preparing America's youth for success in school, active citizenship, productive work, and healthy and safe lives;*
    *   **Healthy Futures** *– Promoting healthy lifestyles and reducing the risk factors that can lead to illness.*

    The application must provide 1) statistics on the needs related to the issue area(s) within the specific local geographic area, and 2) information on the specific measurable outcomes related to those issue areas that the applicant will seek to improve.

ii. **Issue-Based SIF**
    To apply as an issue-based SIF, the application must propose to focus on addressing one of the following priority issue areas within multiple low-income communities:
    *   **Economic Opportunity** *– Increasing economic opportunities for economically disadvantaged individuals;*
    *   **Youth Development and School Support** *– Preparing America's youth for success in school, active citizenship, productive work, and healthy and safe lives;*
    *   **Healthy Futures** *– Promoting healthy lifestyles and reducing the risk factors that can lead to illness.*

    The application must provide 1) statistics on the needs related to the issue area within the geographic areas likely to be served, including statistics demonstrating that those geographic

areas have a high need in the priority issue area, and 2) information on the specific measurable outcomes related to the priority issue area that the applicant will seek to improve.

B. USE OF EVIDENCE

i. *Applicants must include in their application information describing their track record of using rigorous evidence, data, and evaluation tools to:*
- *Select and invest in subgrantees;*
- *Support and monitor the replication and expansion of subgrantees; and*
- *Achieve measurable outcomes.*

C. COMMUNITY RESOURCES

Not applicable. The applicant's Community Resources should be assessed in the Cost-Effectiveness and Budget Adequacy section. Applicants were instructed **not** to provide information in this section. If applicants include information in this section, it should not be considered in your overall rating for the Program Design section.

D. DESCRIPTION OF ACTIVITIES

i. **Subgranting**
a. *Applicants must describe the process by which they will competitively select their nonprofit community organization subgrantees, and, if applicable, the process by which they have pre-selected some subgrantees. Specifically, applicants must describe how their competitive subgrant selection process will ensure a portfolio of subgrantees that are innovative nonprofit community organizations serving low-income communities and that possess:*
- *A strong theory of change;*
- *Strong leadership and financial and management systems, including data management;*
- *A strong financial position, including funding diversity, the ability to meet the requirements for providing dollar-for-dollar matching funds, and the ability to sustain the initiative after the subgrant period concludes;*
- *Strong community relationships;*
- *A commitment to and track record of using data and evaluation for performance and program improvement;*
- *Evidence of effectiveness, including a demonstrated track record of achieving specific measurable outcomes related to the measurable outcomes for the intermediary;*
- *Strong potential for replication or expansion;*
- *A well-defined plan for achieving specific measurable outcomes connected to the measurable outcomes for the intermediary, evaluation of program effectiveness, performance improvement, and replication or expansion; and*
- *A commitment to use grant funds to replicate, expand, or support their programs.*

Either as part of its review of the applications or in clarification reviews prior to award, the Corporation may request additional information regarding pre-selected subgrantees for compliance and appropriate outcomes.

ii. **Technical Assistance and Support**

a. *Applicants must include in their application information describing how they will provide technical assistance and support (other than financial support) that will increase the ability of subgrantees to achieve their measurable outcomes, including replication or expansion. Replication or expansion may happen in various ways (including, for example, creating new sites or affiliating with another program to replicate an intervention) and in multiple contexts (including, for example, serving more people in a current geography or growing to new geographies).*

Provide a panel assessment of the application's PROGRAM DESIGN as follows:

- **Write a brief Narrative Assessment;**
- **List the Significant Strengths and Weaknesses (annotate your comments by referencing the applicable Eligibility or Application Review Criteria); and**
- **Select a Rating for this section.**

Panel Narrative Assessment

The applicant is proposing to expand and replicate 5 existing model programs that provide economic opportunity to lower income people in urban settings through work, skills-building, and asset development. The applicant presents a program design that lacks cohesiveness and clarity around a theory of change. The panel struggled to establish that the program design would lead to a significant impact. While strong evidence was presented about program implementation, there was not enough data presented about outcomes.

Significant Strengths
- The applicant has clearly spelled out a process for bringing five programs to scale across the country. The steps to do so are, for the most part, articulated very clearly in the application, with special attention given to the existing evidentiary basis for this work. The applicant has selected and gives statistical rationale for the selection of cities for expansion/replication of the program. *(Program Design A ii)*
- The applicant has a clear and strong process for selecting subgrantees that includes the creation of local "CSCs" (City-specific Selection Committees) that will bring local expertise and relationships into site decisions *(Program Design D ia)*.
- The applicant has a pool of models in its issue area that have demonstrated moderate to significant success in addressing poverty alleviation. Evaluation of the existing models have included Randomized Control Trials (RCTs) with sample sizes ranging from 2,000 to 16,000. The applicant will be using SIF to replicate these models nationally using SIF. *(Program Design D.i.a)*

Significant Weaknesses
- The models that the applicant seeks to replicate would meet a narrow definition of "strong evidence" although the panel was not able to discern whether the impact of the programs is stronger than comparable models *(Program Design B)*
- The wide range of poverty alleviation that the applicant will use does not concentrate the effort and may be too scattershot. A narrower focus of the issue area (e.g. job training and readiness,

increased saving, behavior modification) would potentially lead to more significant results and better evaluation potential. *(Program Design D.i.a)*

- The applicant seems over-reliant on RCTs to determine effectiveness. Clearly, this is an established and (deservedly) highly regarded methodology. But given the need to look at multiple interactions among the five programs (seeking the aforementioned multiplier effect) a more nuanced approach to evaluation that is rigorous and relevant to the SIF is called for *(Program Design B)*

Select a Rating for PROGRAM DESIGN (double-click in the applicable box and select "checked")

☐ **Excellent**   ☐ **Strong**   ☒ **Satisfactory**   ☐**Weak/Non-responsive**

ORGANIZATIONAL CAPACITY (35%)

The **Social Innovation Fund NOFA states** that the following will be considered when reviewing an applicant's Organizational Capacity.

A: ABILITY TO PROVIDE PROGRAM OVERSIGHT

In evaluating your organization's ability to provide program oversight, the Corporation will consider:

i.   *The extent to which your organization has a sound structure including:*
- *The ability to provide sound programmatic oversight, including:*
  - *Experience with and capacity for evaluation; and*
  - *Experience with and capacity for supporting replication or expansion.*
- *Well-defined roles for your Board of directors, administrators, and staff;*
- *A well-designed plan and systems for organizational (as opposed to subgrantee) self-assessment and continuous improvement; and*
- *The ability to provide and/or secure effective technical assistance.*

ii.   *Whether your organization has a sound record of accomplishment, including the extent to which you:*
- *Have a track record of supporting organizations that demonstrate evidence of impact;*
- *Demonstrate leadership within the organization and strong relationships within the communities served;*
- *Have a track-record of raising substantial resources, and, if you are an existing Federal grantee, having secured the matching resources as required in your prior grant awards; and*
- *The extent to which your community support recurs, increases in scope or amount, and is more diverse, as evidenced by:*
  - *Collaborations that include a diverse spectrum of community stakeholders;*
  - *A broad base of financial support, including local financial and in-kind contributions; and*
  - *Supporters who represent a wide range of community stakeholders.*

B. ABILITY TO PROVIDE FISCAL OVERSIGHT

Entities eligible to apply for SIF grants include:
- *Existing grantmaking institutions, or*
- *Partnerships between an existing grantmaking institution and another grantmaking institution, a State Commission, or the chief executive officer of a unit of general local government*

i. *Existing grantmaking institutions are organizations in existence at the time of the application where, investing in nonprofit community organizations or programs is an essential (rather than collateral) means of fulfilling their mission and vision. In keeping with this view, grantmaking institutions will generally have the following as part of their core operating functions:*
- *Conducting open or otherwise competitive programs to award grants to or make investments in a diverse portfolio of nonprofit community organizations;*
- *Negotiating specific grant requirements with nonprofit community organizations; and*
- *Overseeing and monitoring the performance of grantees.*

ii. *In evaluating your organization's ability to provide fiscal oversight, the Corporation will take into account its review of your organization's capacity. The Corporation will further consider:*
- *The extent to which your organization, or proposed partnership, has key personnel with the knowledge, skills, abilities, and experience to provide fiscal oversight of subgrantees; and*
- *Whether your organization, or proposed partnership, has specific experience in providing fiscal oversight of subgrantees of Federal funds.*

Provide a panel assessment of the application's ORGANIZATIONAL CAPACITY as follows:

- **Write a brief Narrative Assessment;**
- **List the Significant Strengths and Weaknesses (annotate your comments by referencing the applicable Eligibility or Application Review Criteria); and**
- **Select a Rating for this section.**

Panel Narrative Assessment

The applicant presents extremely strong credentials for providing program and financial oversight. In terms of staffing and methodologies, the panel felt that the applicant would deliver the highest level of professionalism and ability. No significant weaknesses were identified.

Significant Strengths
- The applicant has significant experience as a grantmaker and of working within government funding structures. Two of the partners are focused on New York City, while MDRC has a national reach and a long history of partnering with the federal government and executing federal grants. Staff in the other agencies appear to be competent to manage the funds and the subgranting process.
- The applicant has a history of providing technical assistance, largely around contract monitoring, but also in another program provided business mentoring by for profit leaders to

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> nonprofit leaders, demonstrating an understanding of the importance of leadership development *(Organizational Capacity, A, I; B ii)*
> - The MF, MRDC, and CEO have stellar management and board compositions. *(Organizational Capacity A. ii)*

Significant Weaknesses

> None.

Select a Rating for Organizational Capacity (double-click in the applicable box and select "checked")

☒ **Excellent**   ☐ **Strong**   ☐ **Satisfactory**   ☐ Weak/Non-responsive

COST EFFECTIVENESS AND BUDGET ADEQUACY (20%)

The **Social Innovation Fund NOFA states** that the following will be considered when reviewing an applicant's Cost-Effectiveness and Budget Adequacy.

A. BUDGET AND PROGRAM DESIGN

In evaluating the cost effectiveness and budget adequacy of your proposed program, the Corporation will consider:

i.   *Whether your program is cost-effective based on:*
- *The extent to which your program demonstrates diverse, non-Federal resources for program implementation and sustainability;*
- *The extent to which you are proposing to provide more than the minimum required share of the costs of your program; and*
- *Whether the reasonable and necessary costs of your program or project are higher because you are proposing to serve areas that are significantly philanthropically underserved.*

ii.   *Whether your budget is adequate to support your program design.*

B. MATCH SOURCES

i.   *At the time of submission of the application, applicants must demonstrate either cash-on-hand or commitments (or a combination thereof) toward meeting 50 percent their first year matching funds, based on the amount of Federal grant funds applied for.*

ii.   *In addition to the match eligibility criteria, the Corporation will evaluate the extent to which you have a combination of cash-on-hand or commitments to meet the full match requirements, and whether your organization will be able to provide financial resources for your SIF program beyond the minimum required match.*

Provide a panel assessment of the application's COST-EFFECTIVENESS AND BUDGET ADEQUACY as follows:

- **Write a brief Narrative Assessment;**
- **List the Significant Strengths and Weaknesses (annotate your comments by referencing the applicable Eligibility or Application Review Criteria); and**
- **Select a Rating for this section.**

Panel Narrative Assessment

While the applicant presented favorable evidence regarding the amount of match (more than 50%) and likelihood of raising additional monies, these were overcome by a sense that the program was too expensive.

Significant Strengths
- The applicant has secured more than 50% of the needed match funds for year 1. *Cost Effectiveness and Budget Adequacy B i)*. The applicant is covering more than 50% of the costs in year 1, with SIF funds being paid only for regranting and evaluation (see note below, however).
- The applicant is contributing almost 55% of the program costs. *(Cost Effectiveness/Budget A.i)*
- The applicant has out-year commitments of over $19 million, indicating a strong level of support from its funders. *(Cost Effectiveness/Budget B.i)*

Significant Weaknesses
- The applicant proposes to spend 4.57 MM on evaluation in year 1, evaluating 7.78 MM in programs. This is far too significant an investment for year 1, even with a gold-plated partner like MDRC *(Cost Effectiveness and Budget Adequacy, A. ii)*
- MRDC represents a significant portion of the budget but no breakdown or justification is provided so it is difficult to assess its cost effectiveness. Because this program design combines multiple models, the evaluations need to be separate for each model and drives costs up.
- This appears to be a very expensive program, with $8 million going toward startup costs in Year 1. Relative to the number of people who will be served, it is not clearly demonstrated that this amount of money is warranted. *(Cost Effectiveness/Budget A.ii)*

Select a Rating for COST-EFFECTIVENESS AND BUDGET ADEQUACY (double-click in the applicable box and select "checked")

☐ Excellent	☐ Strong	☒ Satisfactory	☐ Weak/Non-responsive

OVERALL APPRAISAL

I. Provide a 3 - 5 sentence Overall Appraisal Statement of the application taking into consideration:

- The Narrative Assessments, significant strengths and weaknesses, and Ratings from each category; and
- The weighting of each category (Program Design (45%), Organizational Capacity (35%), Cost-Effectiveness and Budget Adequacy (20%)).

While the applicant presents a very strong team to execute a program, the diffusion of the program design and the perceived high-cost of the interventions warranted the panel to rate the proposal at "satisfactory." The panel struggled to identify a theory of change that would unify the five program models that were being replicated nationally. Overall, the panel did not have a sense of confidence that the grand scale of the program, over $100 million over 5 years, would lead to outcomes that were demonstrable or cost-effective.

II. Select one Band for this application (double-click in the applicable box and select "checked")
Ensure that your selection is supported by your panel's Narrative Assessments, significant strengths and weaknesses, Ratings, and Overall Appraisal Statement. Take into consideration the weighting of each category.

☐ **Band I (Excellent):** A comprehensive and thorough application of excellent merit with very significant strengths and no/minimal significant weaknesses.

☐ **Band II (Strong):** An application that demonstrates overall competence and is worthy of support, where the value of the significant strengths outweigh the identified weaknesses.

☒ **Band III (Satisfactory):** An application with potential, where strengths and weaknesses are approximately equal. However, some fundamental weaknesses have been identified.

☐ **Band IV (Weak/Non-Responsive):** An application with very significant weaknesses and no/minimal significant strengths that have been identified. This option may also include an application that is non-responsive to the published criteria.

Rank

As a panel, Rank this application in relation to the other applications on your panel. Complete this section only after all applications before your panel have been reviewed and consensus has been achieved on each one. The highest rank is "1".

Rank: __6___ of __7___ total applications on Panel # __3___ .

CONSENSUS RUBRIC

Please use this Consensus Rubric as guidance when selecting your Ratings or Bands.

BAND I (Excellent) — *A BAND I rating reflects that the application is compelling, consistently excellent in quality, and addresses all requirements; thereby showing the highest potential for success.*

The **Excellent** application consistently:
✓ Goes beyond what was requested, showing that the applicant has anticipated issues that may arise.

✓ Provides a thorough, detailed response to all of the information requested.

✓ Provides a clear and highly compelling description of how the proposed activities will achieve the anticipated results.

✓ Provides clear evidence to support all objectives of this section (no assumptions are made).

✓ Supports ideas and objectives with comprehensive plans explaining and connecting ideas to objectives.

BAND II (Strong) — *A BAND II rating reflects that the application is solid, good-quality, and has great potential for success.*

The **Strong** application:
✓ Provides a response to all of the information requested.

✓ Provides a realistic description of how the proposed activities will achieve the anticipated results.

✓ Explains most assumptions and reasons.

✓ Supports ideas with comprehensive plans, examples, or outlines.

BAND III (Satisfactory) — *A BAND III rating reflects that the application generally meets requirements for a reasonable chance of success, but is neither especially strong nor especially weak.*

The **Satisfactory** application:
✓ Covers most of the information requested, with a few exceptions.

✓ Is sometimes unclear how the proposed activities will achieve the anticipated results.

✓ Makes some assumptions and leaves some reasons unexplained.

✓ Supports individual ideas with plans, examples, or outline.

BAND IV (Weak/Non-responsive) — *A weak/non-responsive rating reflects that the application is below standard especially in ability, skill, or quality; indicating that this application will most likely not succeed as described or is not responsive to the application requirements.*

The **Weak/Non-responsive** application:
✓ Does not provide one or more key pieces of requested information.

✓ Gives an unclear description of how the proposed activities will achieve the anticipated results.

✓ Gives many unsupported assumptions and reasons with little or no connection to objectives.

✓ Tends to "parrot" back the question, rather than answer and explain it

✓ Makes many assumptions and many reasons are not defined.

✓ Did not connect the activities to the anticipated results.

✓ Does not address or respond to the requirements/conditions of the NOFA.

✓ Proposes activities that are not consistent with the NOFA and application instructions.

2010 Social Innovation Fund

The Mayor's Fund to Advance New York City

Section 2 – Reviewer Comments: Group 2

SOCIAL INNOVATION FUND 2010

PANEL CONSENSUS FORM

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		C. Community Resources

		D. Description of Activities
		    i. Subgranting
		    ii. Technical Assistance and Support

Organizational Capacity	35%	A. Ability to Provide Program Oversight
		B. Ability to Provide Fiscal Oversight
Cost-Effectiveness and Budget Adequacy	20%	A. Budget and Program Design
		B. Match Sources

Panels will utilize Panel Consensus Calls to discuss each application and come to agreement on the content of the Narrative Assessment for each category, the Rating for each category, the Overall Appraisal Statement and the Band in which the application will be placed. When completing this form, the LR should rely on four primary documents: 1) the application being reviewed; 2) the IRW Compilation for the application being reviewed (compiled prior to discussion by the panel Facilitator); 3) the SIF Notice of Federal Funds Availability (NOFA); 4) the Consensus Rubric at the end of this form.

Please complete the following steps:

1. For each of the 3 categories (Program Design; Organizational Capacity; Cost-Effectiveness and Budget Adequacy), the LR should:
    a. **Write a 3 – 5 sentence Narrative Assessment** reflecting the panel's assessment of the quality of the response in the category being assessed; it is important that this narrative is not a summary of the application, rather the panel's evaluation of the application's quality.
    b. **List the application's significant strengths and weaknesses and annotate each.** Each significant strength or weakness **must** be supported by **at least one** of the Eligibility or Application Review Criteria that were in the SIF NOFA. (examples are included in this form)
    c. **Taking into consideration** both the Narrative Assessment and the listed strengths and weaknesses, **select a Rating** by checking the appropriate box.

2. **Complete the Overall Appraisal section.** In this section, you will:
    a. Provide an Overall Appraisal Statement; and
    b. Select a consensus Band that represents the quality of the application as a whole. The Bands are described in the Overall Appraisal section at the end of this form, and Appendix D of the Review Guide.

3. **After the panel has discussed all applications, provide a Rank for each application.**

PROGRAM DESIGN (45%)

Panel Narrative Assessment

Based on an in-depth knowledge of the research on both implementation and outcomes, the applicant proposes a SIF initiative to increase economic opportunity in up to eight communities using five evidence-based program models. The initiative feels like a demonstration project to bring five evidence-based programs to scale, rather than focusing on building the capacity of the subgrantees. Reviewer's recognized the experience of the applicant partner and collaborator organizations. However, the proposal is unclear regarding the roles of each partner and how the technical assistance functions would be separated from the process and outcome evaluations. The applicant has engaged the Mayors in each of the target communities. Little information is provided regarding the target communities or the anticipated subgrantees, so it is difficult to make any judgment about cost effectiveness.

Significant Strengths

As described in the application, the collaborating partner, MDRC, has been conducting large-scale, multi-site randomized control studies for 35 years, as well as designing, developing and improving programs and organizations. MDRC has been a leader in evaluation methodology and documenting the impact of efforts to improve economic opportunity. As a result, MDRC brings the expertise and credibility needed to implement the proposed initiative. MDRC has designed and implemented past evaluations of Jobs Plus, Family Rewards, and related employment retention and advancement programs. *(Program Design, B. i.)*

The applicant proposes addressing the issue of Economic Opportunity using five evidence-based program models implemented in up to eight cities. Mayors from each city have expressed their commitment to this project and potential philanthropic partners have been identified. *(Program Design A. ii.)*

The detailed descriptions of each of the program model illustrate a deep understanding of the literature and the importance of research in decision making. *(Program Design B. i.)*

All organizations in this application have been involved in numerous evaluation efforts and have experience with complex data systems and analysis to document results. The design includes strong process monitoring to demonstrate implementation fidelity and to identify capacity-building needs of subgrantees. The outcome evaluation relies on rigorous randomized controlled studies of four of the programs. Timely data analysis will provide the foundation for continuous improvement and related technical assistance, as well as promote learning communities and influence policy audiences and other stakeholders. *(Program Design, D. ii. a.)*

Technical assistance will address three stages: planning, implementation and monitoring, and sustainability. A site liaison will be assigned to each of the project locations. *(Program Design D. ii. a.)*

The detailed process for selecting subgrantees includes an initial screen for alignment with the initiative before requesting full proposals. Selected applicants will be invited to participate in Stage 2 of the process. This staging minimizes demands on local applicants and allows for local networking and capacity building through this process. *(Program Design D. i.)*

Significant Weaknesses

Reading this section, I was left wondering if the proposal was more about scaling successful programs than about building non-profits' organizational capacity. Although, not exclusive to one another, this part of the proposal needs more explicit information about how the two are synergistic. *(Program Design, A. ii)*

Little information was given as to how innovation would be defined, identified or assessed. Rather the crux of the grant appears to be on the non-profits ability to implement existing programs with fidelity. *(Program Design, D. i.)*

Again, except for program evaluation and scaling, little information about how the applicants will identify where the subgrantees may need capacity building technical expertise. The core competency addressed in this grant is the ability to implement promising programs. This does not necessarily create a "problem finding and solving" set of skills for the subgrantees. *(Program Design, D. ii.)*

The applicant has identified eight target cities (urban areas) and provided very limited statistics suggesting overall poverty and diversity based on race and immigration status. Some program participants are targeted through income-based programs, such as public housing and Volunteer Income Tax Preparation. It is unclear how the others, Family Rewards, SaveUSA, and YAIP, will target poor or vulnerable communities. *(Program Design A. ii.)*

It is unclear how the implementation of five independent program models will have transformational impact on the urban infrastructure or promote systems integration in ways that will demonstrate innovative benefits beyond the results promised for program participants. *(Program Design B. i.)*

The project design presents five independent program models which will be implemented in varied constellations, but does not discuss how localities will determine which models or the implications of implementing multiple programs simultaneously. *(Program Design, D. i.)*

While the content of technical assistance (TA) is described in detail, the process for providing TA is less clear. While the applicant distinguishes between the partners (MF and CEO) and the collaborator (MDRC), it seems that MDRC will take the lead role in the provision of TA and critical evaluation support. How will CEO be involved in on-going support (beyond their role with selection of subgrantees)? *(Program Design D. ii.)*

Select a Rating for PROGRAM DESIGN (double-click in the applicable box and select "checked")

☐ **Excellent**   ☐ **Strong**   ☒ **Satisfactory**   ☐**Weak/Non-responsive**

ORGANIZATIONAL CAPACITY (35%)

Provide a panel assessment of the application's ORGANIZATIONAL CAPACITY as follows:

- **Write a brief Narrative Assessment;**
- **List the Significant Strengths and Weaknesses (annotate your comments by referencing the applicable Eligibility or Application Review Criteria); and**

- **Select a Rating for this section.**

Panel Narrative Assessment

The proposal identified two partner organizations: MF and CEO and a collaborator: MRDC. All the organizations have strong track record sand deep expertise as initiative planners, grant makers, managers, and evaluators. Leading a national initiative is new to MF and CEO – and their strong New York identify may affect perceptions in other sites. It will be important to clarify the functions of MRDC to ensure appropriate separation between technical assistance and research functions. The organizations have demonstrated capacity to manage Federal funds and to provide effective fiscal oversight.

Significant Strengths

Ample evidence was offered of the applicants' experiences and capacity for evaluation and for supporting replication/ expansion of programs. All organizations involved seem to have strong boards or governing entities with well defined roles for the key staff and others involved in the grant activities. *(Organizational Capacity, A. i.)*

Applicants appear to have a track-record of raising substantial resources. All show they can secure the matching resources as required. *(Organizational Capacity, A. ii.)*

The proposal describes the history of partner organizations in conducting open/ competitive programs to award grants and to make investments in a diverse portfolio of nonprofit community organizations. CEO and MF have worked with over 150 non-profit organizations and have strong support from local government, academic, business, social service and media sectors. *(Organizational Capacity, B. i.)*

Each applicant organizations has worked with various Federal, governmental, and private funding sources, and has direct experience with each of the proposed program models. *(Organizational Capacity, A. i.)*

Each applicant organizations has a history of effective fund raising and public/private partnership, as well as grant making and fiscal management. *(Organizational Capacity, B. i. and ii)*

The proposal reflects an extensive literature review and the on-going work of the partner organization and collaborator to add to the knowledge base. MF and CEO have implemented the five proposed program models, so have experience with the real-world challenges related to program implementation and documenting results. *(Organizational Capacity, A. ii.)*

Significant Weaknesses

Application offers little evidence about how strong relationships are within the communities being proposed and offers only a vague view of the potential communities to be served. *(Organizational Capacity, A. ii.)*

The different status among the two partner organizations (MF and CEO) and the collaborator (MCDC) is unclear. Given their experience working nationally, MCDC is likely to play a leadership role throughout the project (not limited to evaluation). *(Organizational Capacity, A. i.)*

The national experience of the MF and CEO seems to be limited to networking and learning communities, rather than grant making and program implementation. The local "identity" of the intermediary may limit their effectiveness providing direction and technical assistance to other localities and non-profit organizations. *(Organizational Capacity, A. i.)*

CEO is an active partner in the project, yet no funds are allocated for their involvement. As part of a city government agency at a time of extremely limited public resources, is it realistic for them to make the commitment to support this project on an in-kind basis? *(Organizational Capacity, A. i.)*

Select a Rating for ORGANIZATIONAL CAPACITY (double-click in the applicable box and select "checked")

☐ **Excellent**　　　☒ **Strong**　　　☐ **Satisfactory**　　　☐**Weak/Non-responsive**

COST EFFECTIVENESS AND BUDGET ADEQUACY (20%)

Provide a panel assessment of the application's COST-EFFECTIVENESS AND BUDGET ADEQUACY as follows:

- **Write a brief Narrative Assessment;**
- **List the Significant Strengths and Weaknesses (annotate your comments by referencing the applicable Eligibility or Application Review Criteria); and**
- **Select a Rating for this section.**

Panel Narrative Assessment

The applicants demonstrate fiscal soundness and strong experience with grant making and monitoring performance. Applicant has exceeded match requirements and identified significant commitments for full five year grant period, as well as identifying potential local funders. Budget based on detailed forecasting of participation and program implementation for each model, but does not include costs of collaboration or capacity building. It is difficult to assess cost effectiveness with no information about sites or subgrantees.

Significant Strengths

The applicants have demonstrated their effectiveness raising funds and managing multiple funding streams from both private and public sources. The applicant offers more than the minimum required share for costs. *(Cost Effectiveness, A.i and B i)*

Application presents a careful calculation of the projected costs (and target participation rates) in the first year and good estimates for the out years. *(Cost Effectiveness, A i. and ii.)*

Applicant has identified potential philanthropic support in each of the project localities. *(Cost Effectiveness, B. ii.)*

Applicant has a commitment for approximately 25% of costs for five year project period from the Bloomberg Foundation and Open Society Foundation. *(Cost Effectiveness, B. ii.)*

Matching funds exceed requirement ($6,934,320 for $5,700,000 request). *(Cost Effectiveness, B. i.)*

Significant Weaknesses

The application does not identify specific not-for-profits and only potential sites, so it is not possible to determine whether the reasonable and necessary costs of the program or project are higher or if the potential areas to be served are significantly philanthropically underserved. *(Cost Effectiveness, A. i.)*

Costs seem to be for direct program operations, technical assistance, and evaluation. There is no discussion of costs of training, local networks, and other collaboration likely to be necessary to influence policy and related systems reform. *(Cost Effectiveness, A. ii.)*

Select a Rating for COST-EFFECTIVENESS AND BUDGET ADEQUACY (double-click in the applicable box and select "checked")

☐ **Excellent**   ☒ **Strong**   ☐ **Satisfactory**   ☐**Weak/Non-responsive**

OVERALL APPRAISAL

I. **Provide a 3 - 5 sentence Overall Appraisal Statement of the application taking into consideration:**

- The Narrative Assessments, significant strengths and weaknesses, and Ratings from each category; and
- The weighting of each category (Program Design (45%), Organizational Capacity (35%), Cost-Effectiveness and Budget Adequacy (20%)).

The multiple objectives of this proposal may result in tension between the focus on a strong, rigorous research design and the intent to adapt program models and strengthen local subgrantees. It will be critical to address issues of sustainability to ensure that this initiative goes beyond a multi-site demonstration project testing efforts to scale up evidence-based programs. Given the strength of partner organizations, the proposed initiative is likely to be well implemented and experience documented in ways that will inform audiences beyond the local sites. The substantial funds already committed by the Bloomberg Foundation, and the public-private nature of the initiative suggest that non-Federal match will not be a significant obstacle.

II. **Select one Band for this application** (double-click in the applicable box and select "checked")
Ensure that your selection is supported by your panel's Narrative Assessments, significant strengths and weaknesses, Ratings, and Overall Appraisal Statement. Take into consideration the weighting of each category.

☐ **Band I (Excellent):** A comprehensive and thorough application of excellent merit with very significant strengths and no/minimal significant weaknesses.

☒ **Band II (Strong):** An application that demonstrates overall competence and is worthy of support, where the value of the significant strengths outweigh the identified weaknesses.

☐ **Band III (Satisfactory):** An application with potential, where strengths and weaknesses are approximately equal. However, some fundamental weaknesses have been identified.

☐ **Band IV (Weak/Non-Responsive):** An application with very significant weaknesses and no/minimal significant strengths that have been identified. This option may also include an application that is non-responsive to the published criteria.

Rank

As a panel, Rank this application in relation to the other applications on your panel. Complete this section only after all applications before your panel have been reviewed and consensus has been achieved on each one. The highest rank is "1".

Rank: __3___ of ___6__ total applications on Panel # ___15__ .

CONSENSUS RUBRIC

Please use this Consensus Rubric as guidance when selecting your Ratings or Bands.

BAND I (Excellent) — *A BAND I rating reflects that the application is compelling, consistently excellent in quality, and addresses all requirements; thereby showing the highest potential for success.*

The **Excellent** application consistently:
- ✓ Goes beyond what was requested, showing that the applicant has anticipated issues that may arise.
- ✓ Provides a thorough, detailed response to all of the information requested.
- ✓ Provides a clear and highly compelling description of how the proposed activities will achieve the anticipated results.
- ✓ Provides clear evidence to support all objectives of this section (no assumptions are made).
- ✓ Supports ideas and objectives with comprehensive plans explaining and connecting ideas to objectives.

BAND II (Strong) — *A BAND II rating reflects that the application is solid, good-quality, and has great potential for success.*

The **Strong** application:
- ✓ Provides a response to all of the information requested.
- ✓ Provides a realistic description of how the proposed activities will achieve the anticipated results.
- ✓ Explains most assumptions and reasons.
- ✓ Supports ideas with comprehensive plans, examples, or outlines.

BAND III (Satisfactory) — *A BAND III rating reflects that the application generally meets requirements for a reasonable chance of success, but is neither especially strong nor especially weak.*

The **Satisfactory** application:
- ✓ Covers most of the information requested, with a few exceptions.
- ✓ Is sometimes unclear how the proposed activities will achieve the anticipated results.
- ✓ Makes some assumptions and leaves some reasons unexplained.
- ✓ Supports individual ideas with plans, examples, or outline.

BAND IV (Weak/Non-responsive) — *A weak/non-responsive rating reflects that the application is below standard especially in ability, skill, or quality; indicating that this application will most likely not succeed as described or is not responsive to the application requirements.*

The **Weak/Non-responsive** application:
- ✓ Does not provide one or more key pieces of requested information.
- ✓ Gives an unclear description of how the proposed activities will achieve the anticipated results.
- ✓ Gives many unsupported assumptions and reasons with little or no connection to objectives.
- ✓ Tends to "parrot" back the question, rather than answer and explain it
- ✓ Makes many assumptions and many reasons are not defined.
- ✓ Did not connect the activities to the anticipated results.
- ✓ Does not address or respond to the requirements/conditions of the NOFA.
- ✓ Proposes activities that are not consistent with the NOFA and application instructions.